

# Art History



**A Collection of Poems  
by Doug Tanoury**

# **Art History – A Collection of Poems by Doug Tanoury**

Cover Art: Torso of Aphrodite, 1st Century BC, Detroit Institute of Arts

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## **Art History – A Collection of Poems by Doug Tanoury**

### **Republican Songs**

A tall and handsome woman,  
Fully tattooed across her neck,  
Shoulders, arms and hands, she was  
All the colors of a garden in Granada.

When she wore a sleeveless dress  
And gestured when she talked, it was  
A flight of light: a blur of reds,  
A swirl of blues and flash of greens.

When she sang sad Republican songs from the  
Spanish Civil War, her hands danced in slow  
Gentle motions like Birds of Paradise  
Touched by a tropical breeze.

## Persian Rice

For dinner she makes a large  
Platter of Persian rice that is  
An artist's pallet, where grains  
Of white and yellow mass and mingle  
With dried red fruits like a multitude  
Of Muslim pilgrims converging in Mecca.

In the kitchen she talks to me  
As she is busy at the stove,  
Tipping a pan and scooping. She repeats  
The recipe over the contents as it were  
A secret incantation and I catch only...  
Cinnamon, cumin and cardamom.

I speak them rapidly back to her  
In almost a half-whisper,  
With the earnestness of a supplicant  
Reciting a prayer, and I tell her  
There is poetry in Persian Rice;  
It is alive with alliterative spice.

It sits steaming on the table between us,  
Bejeweled with pomegranate seeds,  
Rose petal and bits of oranges.  
In the first bite, I taste a secret pinch of saffron,  
An unseen dash of sumac and all the flavors  
Of my grandmother's pantry.

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### Beneath the Water

Today was the day he died  
Many years ago now.  
I remember I was at his bedside  
At his passing. He said hello,  
Which I took as his goodbye,  
As he slowly drifted like the body  
Of a down man floating just below  
The water of a green river  
Toward an ocean of great blue beyond.

There was no poetry,  
Only prose that day,  
As he moved in and out of consciousness  
Like a man lost at sea,  
Bobbing up at intervals and  
Breaking the surface  
Gulping for air.

There was a priest in a black suite;  
He may have actually worn casual street clothes,  
I can't quite recall,  
Who read the Gospel:  
“What father, whose son asked for a loaf of bread  
Would give him a stone,  
Or a fish and give him a serpent...”

And it went on:  
“He who loves his life  
Shall lose it, and he who hates it  
Shall find it...”  
I who asked for bread and fish  
Listened hungry and understood.

And when his head slipped quietly  
Beneath the water,  
I held my breath too,  
Just to be with him  
A few moments longer.

## Sunday Morning

Sunday morning appeared  
Paroxysmally  
Over Grayland Avenue  
And I-195 beyond,  
In accustomed fashion  
Filling the sunrise windows  
Of my bedroom and growing  
From a weak tea stain  
Toward a soft amber light,

And my first thought,  
As I flipped the heavy down quilt  
Back with a sudden flap of my arm  
To arise,  
Is my last from the night before.  
Yesterday  
Persists and intrudes into  
Today,  
And I begin where I left off.

From some inner part,  
Perhaps my heart,  
A message is repeated,  
One I somehow  
Missed the meaning of  
The day before, and so,  
In endless repetition  
It is replayed for  
My more remedial mind.

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### **Two Blondes Within a Poem**

I rescued a book from a dumpster  
In downtown Baltimore as I walked to  
Penn Station one morning. I waded in garbage,  
Sinking somewhere between knees and thighs,  
Unsteady on my feet like I was standing in the surf.  
I hauled it out of the trash and held it skyward,  
As I struggled for balance, as if it were  
A large shellfish that I plucked from the sea.  
It was a volume of collected poems in  
Which, years later, I first read Robert Lowell's  
Depiction of William Carlos Williams with his aged mother,  
And I am sure at some weak moment, I would  
Trade the book, Lowell himself, both Williams and his  
Mother, for two blondes within a poem.

## The Blue Bicycle

I happened to see  
A child's blue bicycle  
Today and I was touched.

It was just like yours,  
A little girl's and Peacock blue.  
It made me remember

Walking into a pet store  
With you long ago  
On a neighborhood

Excursion. We were  
Following the sounds  
Of puppies yapping,

Only to be surprised  
By a cageful of parrots  
Fluttering from perch

To perch, playfully  
Making the puppy yelps  
Of a large litter.

Some things are just not  
What they initially  
Seem to be.

Isn't it amazing,  
The places that a  
Bicycle can take you.

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### **Dirty Martini**

Martinis are sinfully sexy drinks.  
Due mostly to their decadent  
Art deco shape,  
Ethereal and elegant,  
Like spaghetti straps on a sequin dress.  
A stiletto heel stem lifts a liquid  
That rises in lighter than air fashion  
Within a delicate glass blossom  
Where blue cheese stuffed olives  
Float in alcohol free fall.

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### Spring

Spring comes to me now  
Like either a green hiatus  
Or an abrupt scene change  
In the surrealistic landscape of some dream  
And I am neither fully awake  
Nor completely aware  
Of all its meaning and import.

The willows awaken  
In wisps of pale and subtle growth  
That forms around their branches like a mist,  
A nimbus of color,  
That sways in the breeze on May mornings  
In ways that reminds me of the soft movement of air  
In a woman's hair.

I walk through the day,  
A somnambulist's unconscious journey,  
Seeing, but not seeing,  
Hearing, but not hearing,  
Feeling, but not feeling,  
Perceiving, but not perceiving.

And when I talk, it is the one sided  
Soliloquy of a sleeper's dialoged  
Where each word I whisper  
Has the visible substance of the vapor  
Exhaled with each breath  
Onto the frozen air of a January morning.

I dream of spring,  
Of soft breezes and mild mornings  
And of the sycamores  
That awaken ever so slowly  
And will not show a hint of foliage  
Until the first days of June.

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### **Colonnade Gray**

There was a cloister  
Connecting the rectory  
To the church.

As a boy, I called it  
A walkway bordered  
By petite columns.

Years later when  
I understood what  
An arcade was,

I remembered how  
The columns formed an  
Interplay of light and shadow

In an interesting way,  
Backlit with sunrise  
On summer mornings,

And I wondered  
What could a priest  
Possibly be thinking

As he walked through  
This walkway bordered  
By those petite columns

To say morning Mass  
Attended always  
By the same old women.

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### **Stone Lions**

Standing outside the  
Art Museum trying to  
Hail a passing cab.

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### **The Blue Vase**

Lapis lazuli is the color of the glaze  
On the blue vase on the shelf,  
And its shape is uniquely female  
With a buxom bulging chest  
And a tapering waist dropping  
Toward a thin base, like a lyric soprano  
I have seen singing.

Perhaps it is the deep blueness,  
The way the glaze catches the light  
More than its operatic shape  
That always draws my eye,  
The iridescent inner glow  
That reminds me of an evening sky  
Painted in the colors of late July.

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### **Art History**

The most pervasive and long-lasting memory of her:  
She was lying across a large mattress partially wrapped  
In the bed linen in an afternoon of white marble.

Torso of Aphrodite, I called her as she flung the sheet  
Off to expose shoulders, breasts and stomach  
In a study of white on white that Whistler might paint.

She heard me as her hair tumbled across her face  
Until only her smile was unobscured and fully visible,  
Along with cream thighs and milk breasts in the sunlight.

The “S” shape of her lying across the bed in the  
Sculpture garden of my memory, a Roman copy of  
A Greek original and the whiteness of her naked smile.

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### **Aging**

(Chicago's Fog)

Forgetfulness steals in silently  
And without form, it floats  
Like the fog from Lake Michigan.

Unable to recall my high-rise  
Apartment on Lakeshore and Banks,  
The dense clouds of Chicago

Wrapped in a thick shroud so pervasive  
All light, shape and color fade and space  
Is filled with a November greyscale.

The powerful scent of the lobby upon first  
Entering, where the large doorman sat behind  
The small desk, is fleeting and grows indistinct,

As memory fades until all afternoons  
And every evening sit forgotten on the  
Cold soapstone counter of my dim lit kitchen.

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### Quarter Horse Blues

Charles Bukowski was gloomy and dark  
As a December afternoon in Detroit.  
If sadness had a color his went far beyond blue,  
Toward the deepest melancholy hues of the purple.

After breakfast (two boilermakers)  
He would head to the Hollywood Park Racetrack  
Where his unhappiness waned  
To some level of comfort, due to his  
Extreme conceit, madness and greed  
(These are his own words).

The track was a simple diversion from reality  
and the horses, symbols of his dangerous passions,  
The runaway emotions that hurt him and  
Those around him, especially  
Those closest to him. He was a suicide bomber  
For lovers, friends and more unsuspecting victims,  
The collateral damage of a deep purple in him.

He said that the horses always looked  
To be in better shape than the people.  
I must say that I agree fully,  
And although it is debatable if horses  
truly have higher intelligence than humans,  
The fact that they are more trustworthy  
And honest is indisputable, and of course,  
It says something about people and horses,  
And an awful lot about Bukowski.

## In the Metro

My daily journey begins in solitary steps  
Through empty and dark streets  
On a January morning before sunrise.  
My feet shuffling to the station,  
A grand public space, without doors  
And partially open to the sky and air  
Like a Roman amphitheater  
Built into the side of a hill.

I float far down the long-stretched escalators  
That rise from nothing and gave more steps  
Than the great Mayan pyramids at Uxmal and Chichén Itzá.  
They waterfall in endlessly ascent and descent cascade,  
In long liquid counter currents  
That flow upstream and downstream  
Before collapsing and folding into nothingness.

The Metro is that mystical "somewhere" place  
Where it is always "five o'clock",  
Where the air is dark Honduran rum.  
I sail slowly through the twilight and watch  
Each stained yellow window of a passing train car  
Like frames running in a film chockablock with faces

In the metro's grand chambered halls  
There is no eating or drinking.  
It is a gloom filled necropolis without color,  
In black and white.  
Only the dead live there,  
Without feathers, with only scales,  
Without poetry, only prose.

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### **Highlands of Iceland**

The empty road through the highlands cuts through a rocky landscape  
And a stream snakes its way toward a green lake, both stretching out toward  
Far off mountain peaks obscured in clouds, and the wasteland appears  
To throw out its arms to welcome me

In a gesture like when old friends who have not seen each other for a long while  
Embrace, with arm flinging wide in slightly exaggerated and dramatic  
Movement toward openness and the hug is hard and held long, the wasteland  
Greeted me in such a way,

As if it were a childhood friend, a high school chum, a college buddy,  
Someone that knows your secret strengths and weakness from a time  
When you didn't have to hide them, someone who knows your origins and past,  
And even knew your parents,

And to me the landscape seemed intimately familiar like the barren expanse  
Of a blacktop parking lot south of Atwater Street in downtown Detroit,  
Where the asphalt extends right to the river's blue-green edge in the  
Slightly purple twilights of December afternoons.

## Phantasmagoria

Late in the evening  
In the quiet of long winter nights  
Broken only by the elongated exhales  
And raspy respiration of the furnace,  
I stay awake when everyone is asleep

And explore fragrances,  
Many with French names:  
*Fleur d'Interdit,*  
*Nombre Noir,*  
*Eau d'Orange Verte,*  
And others with only a single English word:  
*Poison,*  
*Obsession,*  
*Opium.*

Words that lull the mind with connotations  
Of an altered consciousness  
That Timothy Leary would embrace,  
A dreamlike fugue state  
Or at least something less than  
Full possession of one's faculties.

I close my eyes and imagine  
Seductive scents winding their way  
Slowly past my nostrils  
Toward dark inner olfactory passages  
Like a bee squeezing its way  
Through slender tubes  
And slick floral chambers  
Of an orchid.

## Naked Astrophysics

Undressed, there is a quiet vulnerability  
She wears and like nature herself, she is never  
Truly naked, but rather, always holds something  
Back that remains partially hidden and is never  
Fully revealed.

A nude frozen for a moment in her bath,  
Something Bonnard might paint, surrounded by  
Diffused colors of a Mediterranean twilight,  
A soft blueness of a sunset tipped slightly toward  
The ultra-violet side of the spectrum that is more a  
Property of the atmosphere than of any  
Physical light.

She is a singularity where sight, sound, smell  
And touch converge with such intensity,  
And forces of attraction are so powerful,  
That space itself is warped until both the  
Tanned public and pale private places  
Of her skin become an event horizon, where  
Time stops, and the memory of a lover's smile  
Lingers forever.

## Saint Christina the Astonishing

St. Christina prays, with head tossed back  
And eyes uplifted toward heaven, as she kneels  
In the topmost branches of a birch tree,  
Under a sky that I remember from my childhood,  
A rare blue egg tempera wash that would hang  
Over the near Eastside on June mornings.

In a tree crowded with colorful birds that sing  
Sweet songs amid green foliage, perches one  
Sepia Saint, a lone pelican far from the sea,  
A white feathered symbol of transcendence  
And selfless sacrifice escaping the strong smell  
Of the sinful by climbing high and far from its reach.

On the ground below, two barefoot priests  
In black robes look up, one holds a cord to bind her,  
The other, a ladder to snatch her, twisting and kicking  
Against their grasp, like a bird pulled from its perch,  
Out of the rare blue air and egg tempera sky,  
Out of all the June mornings of my childhood.

## **Art History – A Collection of Poems by Doug Tanoury**

### **Orange**

Tonight, I thought of orange and was grateful  
I am a poet and not a painter.

I find orange most poetic,  
In all its shades and hues, it shines warmth,  
Sweetness and the fresh smell of citrus.  
I have this color in common  
With abstract expressionist painters  
And New York School poets.

Orange –  
The summer sunset in Greenwich Village  
And deserving of elevation to high literary status  
On that basis alone, or perhaps more fitting,  
Seeing a woman in a black evening dress  
Turning her head in a way that swings  
Her dangling citrine earrings  
So they catch the light just so.

### **Winter's Decision**

Footsteps across a  
Field change directions – a choice  
Recorded in snow.

### Intellectual Grey

Cold and remote,  
His button-down formality,  
Made him straight faced  
And unreachable,

For he had forgotten  
The sound of wind in the trees,  
And the smell of the river  
On June mornings.

### Paloma Picasso Twilight

This poem began with death and destruction,  
The sky filled with falling bombs, and the realization  
That we create our own repeated disasters  
Like Picasso persistently drawing doves,  
Degas painting dancers, and Bach playing fugues.

In this poem that would paint the Guernica  
Of me loving you, I remember gentle movement  
In the kuka palm overgrown with bougainvillea  
Just after sunset, and the soft rustling sounds  
From the fronds as dove's nest for the night.

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### **Trademarks**

In the poorest pueblo  
The tiendas have earthen floors,  
Roofs of palapa and corrugated  
Steel panels laid over  
With sheets of tar paper, and  
The walls have large new letters that say  
“Siempre” in white and red  
Freshly painted by the local subsidiary  
Of a distant global conglomerate.

When the rain is relentlessly hard  
And color is washed away  
Behind the dull grey curtain  
Of a tropical downpour  
Obscuring the bright branding  
On a cinderblock wall  
And proves even in time's slow progress  
Across a Mexican afternoon,  
The stubborn persistence  
Of symbols that never sleep

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### **Plum Street and Main**

I pause as I pass the corner  
Of Plum Street and Main,  
For it is there that I find  
That I have lost  
Some critical component  
Of personal identity,  
A key “something”  
That seems to have  
Suddenly slipped away.

Memories are like city streets  
And progress like poems  
That take you in a certain direction,  
To a particular place,  
And then intersect and turn  
In switchback fashion  
To run back upon themselves,  
In surprising and often crazy ways  
That make no sense,  
Hairpin turns take you from anticipation  
To the deflated silence of quiet cul-de-sacs  
And dead-end disappointment.

The phantasmagoria of my past  
Has a hiatus so abrupt  
That I awaken from  
A psychogenic fugue  
And find myself in some strange city  
At the starkly plain and uninteresting  
Intersection of Plum Street and Main,  
Without her.

## Disambiguation

It was a time of childhood innocence  
When things were still simple.  
It was when we loved most purely,  
An uncomplicated time when  
Evil and goodness held fairy tale clarity,  
And we could see clearly,  
With no obscurity or ambiguity,  
Through a person—  
Into the stepmother's dark heart  
And the frog prince's wounded soul.

That was long ago, before  
Babel and Jabberwocky  
Grew up between us, words spoken  
Without love, sharp edged, jagged  
Rough and cutting, that defines the tone  
Of all our current conversations  
As if an evil spell, that cannot be broken,  
Has been cast on us, blinding us  
To each other's goodness,  
Making us forget our past.

So we remain in the powerful grip  
Of something truly evil,  
The hapless enchanted victims  
Of the dark insidious magic that binds us,  
Steals our vision and clouds our memory.  
Neither long discourses, verbose explanations  
Nor any other adult devices can break the spell,  
But only a child's trusting blind belief  
In the transforming and liberating power  
Of a fairy tale kiss can free us.

## An Angel of the Modern Age

In a dim background  
Of a weak December sunrise,  
Passing tail pipes smoke,  
Bellow exhaust, and leave behind  
Grime and soot smeared across  
A new morning snow,

And it is on these colorless days  
When the light is grainy and fuzzy  
Like old black and white photos  
From my childhood  
That frame an atmosphere  
Of frozen air that cannot be breathed,

That I realize most fully  
That there is an angel of death stalking me  
Quietly,  
Wearing new sneakers  
With soles that leave a deep waffle print  
Stamped upon the snow-covered walk,

As it stands at my front door,  
Ringing the bell that interrupts everything,  
Holding twin shell-casing martini shakers;  
Its head encircled by a nimbus of doom  
Marked with skulls, mushroom clouds and hearts.  
It coyly waits what seems like forever,

And when I open the door, full black wings  
Engulf and wrap me tightly like a shroud,  
Folding me in the tight dark embrace  
Of sudden annihilation  
And oblivion that confers  
The richness of full exoneration.

## Year of the Steel Widgets

Western and Chinese zodiacs converged,  
When I met her sitting at the bar.  
It was there that I watched for the first time  
A flight of ideas,  
Feathered things  
Twisted and intertwined—  
Verbs embraced adverbs,  
Adjectives put arms around nouns,  
And pronouns touch  
The bare shoulders of prepositions  
In that moment of conjunctions  
When stars aligned.

I sat on a barstool  
Next to her,  
Our faces bathed  
In the shimmer  
Of bar room light,  
As I watched a story unravel.  
Her mouth forming words  
Like a metal press stamping out parts,  
The staccato of syllables  
Falling from her mouth  
In rapid succession  
As a punch pounds out steel widgets.

Full of restraint and reserve,  
I listened. I remember  
The arcane alchemy of the moment  
When my yang addressed her yin;  
As I spoke, slow and simple,  
Understated and without devices,  
It was with a hint of sadness,  
That at the time I did not understand,  
But only now fully comprehend.  
It was the melancholy mood  
Created in classic Chinese verse  
When poets speak of distant love,  
Far away, over tall green mountains.

## The Hidden Carousel

Like a figure in a Dali print,  
My body opens like a bureau.  
From the most critical places  
Of my anatomy: forehead,  
Chest, abdomen and groin  
I open to expose the underwear  
Of my most inner soul,  
And the thought of a carousel  
On a summer day  
That sits mostly forgotten  
In some seldom used drawer  
Left slightly ajar,  
With old arcade tokens,  
Pens that no longer write,  
Pocket knives grown dull  
Alongside lone cuff links  
That have lost their mate  
And a pale blue rabbit's foot.  
Amid this jumble of unused junk  
There is a centrifugal force that  
Pulls me this way and  
Pushes me that,  
As a calliope plays a merry tune  
In endless repetition  
As time turns back  
Upon itself –  
The July sky above the trees  
Has painted white clouds  
On a rabbit foot blue afternoon,  
As brightly colored horses gallop  
Toward the black and white August  
Of long ago,  
Supported by clunking worn machinery  
That spins merrily on forever  
Toward failure.

## Remembering Elephants

One summer the circus train came to Richmond.  
And stopped downtown along the James River.  
The animals were unloaded from the boxcars,

And I watched the slow exodus pass.  
It reminded me of the story of Noah  
Ushering the animals from the ark two by two.

Men were shouting and an occasional clanging  
Of metal on metal coming from some hidden source,  
And there were animal sounds that could not be identified.

When the elephants passed, I shouted:  
“Free the elephants! Free them!” The handlers and elephants  
Both ignored me as they formed a line and marched off.

And the site of them crossing the river, marching  
Single file across the Robert E. Lee Bridge, each holding the tail  
Of the elephant in front of them with their trunk.

The downtown skyline looked like a stage backdrop, as  
They moved in a long line ordered by size, across that sad  
Summer afternoon that I cannot seem to forget.

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### **Open Sea**

In the vastness,  
The great expanse  
Of constant churning motion  
I found you  
The only thing to cling to.

Awash in waves,  
Somewhere along the way  
I made a cruel-sea decision  
To hang on  
And not let go.

## Pound's Life

*"The Mediterranean yielded up its pigments,  
moment by moment, to the brutal sunshine."*

*Tender is the Night – F. Scott Fitzgerald*

I described in great detail to her  
how the sun was shining  
on the Mediterranean that day,

as brightly as in an F. Scott Fitzgerald novel.  
The light was brilliant that day.  
I stumbled upon Ezra Pound's plaque

on the wall of a narrow street in Rapallo.  
surprised, I slowly read it, for I thought he had lived  
in Venice, but now I find he was here too.

I told her of his war years, his capture,  
how influential friends saved his life when  
they committed him to St. Elizabeth's.

She smiled as I told her the story of Pound,  
and I was uncertain if she was smiling  
at Pound's life or

if she were merely smiling at me  
telling her the story of Pound's life,  
but the answer eventually came,

for when she first sees me  
on any given occasion,  
with her mouth bracketed by

deep parenthetical dimples,  
she always smiles at me  
as if I myself am Pound's life.

## **Art History – A Collection of Poems by Doug Tanoury**

### **Relic Bronze**

She is gone,  
And all that is left of her  
Is a vestigial remnant.

A wine cork from the one bottle  
We shared together  
Enshrined in a dresser drawer,

Nestled between pairs  
Of my undershorts  
And t-shirts.

## **Art History – A Collection of Poems by Doug Tanoury**

### **Human Skull**

In the corner on the lower shelf  
Of a curio cabinet at The Walters  
It is displayed.

Its empty eye sockets,  
Nasal cavity and toothless grin  
Are coral apertures

Where clownfish swim  
Through ivory openings  
From shadow to light

In shallow sunlit waters,  
Where white-capped waves  
Break upon the bare heads of bone reefs.

## The Yellow Sofa

My parent's yellow sofa  
Was stored away in the attic,  
Covered in a sheet of thick plastic  
Which in turn was covered  
In a deep layer of dust.

It was the same dust  
That blanketed all their stored  
Furniture and belongings  
Like a radioactive fallout or  
A layer of dirty ice in nuclear winter.

The sofa was a burning canary color  
As bright as July afternoons  
Or the ripe lemons you would find  
Piled together in a large bowl  
In the center of the kitchen table.

It was a riotous happy,  
Glee-filled joyous color  
That echoed all the loud shouting  
And knee slapping laughter  
Of my father entertaining.

Only silence sat on the sofa  
And the fallout particles of the past.  
The clink of cocktail glasses  
And ice cubes stirred with swizzle sticks  
Have faded into nothing.

The attic air was hot and the sofa  
Remained shrouded and unused  
Through most of my childhood  
Enduring the turbocharged heat  
Of endless Detroit summers.

## Art History – A Collection of Poems by Doug Tanoury

### Mercury

In the sculpture garden at The Walters I find  
Zanobi Lastricati's bronze of Mercury  
Wearing only a winged helmet that makes his  
Nakedness appear more completely nude.  
His legs poised in a dancer's stance,  
The open airiness between both knees and ankles  
Adding grace and lightness to his pose.

I remember this head and winged helmet  
From the ancient world, from the time before  
Broken caduceus, when I was still receptive  
To messages from the gods, where my grandfather  
Would slowly reach into his pocket and pull out  
A plastic change purse containing droplets of quicksilver  
Wedged between wheat pennies and buffalo nickels.

Mercury's bronze hands are big and massive,  
A sculptor's trick since classical times to properly  
Scale proportion to fool the eye, and call to mind  
From antiquity, my grandfather's enlarged and  
Oversized hands, when his great fist would open,  
Palm upturned, to reveal gargantuan possibility  
Contained in the smallness of a Mercury dime.

## The Odalisque

The woman in the red turban  
Plays a long neck lute.  
Her lips are parted slightly as she sings.

Her voice is soft, with lyrics mostly mouthed.  
Her breath, the mere shadow of a whisper  
Floating beneath vibrating strings

Punctuated by a high pitched twang  
That signals the music's end and lingers persistently  
In the air before falling into silence.

Her eyes cast upward speak a secret longing,  
As behind her in the courtyard, the shadows  
Of late afternoon grow longer.

## **Art History – A Collection of Poems by Doug Tanoury**

### **Bugler's Lament**

Over the years  
You have faded into  
The flatness of two dimensions,  
And all that is left of you  
In my life is a  
Black and white photo  
Of a soldier  
In a far corner of my desk,  
A simple reminder  
Of a twisted history—

It is at quiet and peaceful  
Moments that I reflect  
On the FUBAR and  
SNAFU of you,  
Wars waged,  
Won and lost,  
The battles bungled  
And untold skirmishes  
Along a fluid front  
Shrouded in fog.

## The Sycamores on Strawberry Street

Just before sunset today  
As I walked on Strawberry Street,  
It was a sycamore tree,

Not too tall and not very old,  
But rather ordinary and mostly unremarkable  
That served as a mnemonic

Of memory and caused me to recall  
(for such totems and Fetishes fill my life)  
A tree I looked at often

From my front porch steps  
It was tall and old and mostly bare  
Well into the last days of June

Long after the ash  
And maple leaves were abundant,  
Fully formed and gathering

Sunlight on the trees.  
I was always surprised how late  
It remained leafless

Through late spring and into  
Early summer, and so seeing such  
Similar, but lesser trees,

Made me pause  
And think of the glory of that  
Sycamore in August,

How fully it was adorned  
In sunset light that  
Cast a soft pink hue on its

Trunk and inner limbs,  
And from these seasonal studies  
Sitting on a front porch step

## **Art History – A Collection of Poems by Doug Tanoury**

In the stained-glass light of August sunsets  
The Sycamores on Strawberry Street  
I realize it is often the case that one symbol

Stands for another, in the sometimes  
Subtle, ironic and insidious way  
That symbols do, that is how

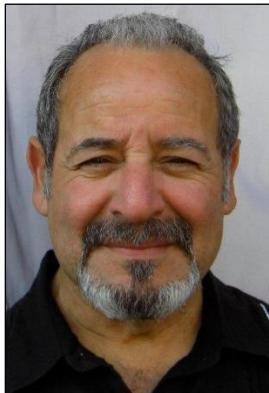
On Strawberry Street today,  
Beneath a sycamore  
She spoke to me, quite unexpectedly,

With a little girl's voice  
From the past that called me "Dad".  
And there by the sycamores

Sadness overtook me,  
In the symbolism of sunset light  
That shines on Strawberry Street.

## **Art History – A Collection of Poems by Doug Tanoury**

### **About Doug Tanoury**



Doug Tanoury has always felt that poetry should communicate the most complex concepts in the simplest language possible, and that the poetry should elevate common everyday experience into the extraordinary and fantastic. This transformation of mundane experience into the magical has always been the goal of his craft.

Doug Tanoury has been writing poetry all his adult life, and his work has been widely featured in journals, magazines and online publications.

## **Art History – A Collection of Poems by Doug Tanoury**

### **Other books of poetry by Doug Tanoury**

- ❖ Avon Poems
- ❖ Chicago Poems
- ❖ City Sonnets
- ❖ Cloud Boulevard
- ❖ Crows on My Path
- ❖ Detroit Poems
- ❖ Exodus Poems
- ❖ Getting Religion
- ❖ Hollywood Park Poems
- ❖ Merida Poems
- ❖ Of Evenings in Eden
- ❖ Produce Poems
- ❖ St. Mary's Art Cloister
- ❖ The Physics of Tea
- ❖ Theogony
- ❖ Tolstoy's Ghost
- ❖ Venus Imperfect
- ❖ Wounded Muse
- ❖ Zen Bandits